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General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
40th meeting
held on
Monday, 16 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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A/C.2/47/SR.40
27 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/47/554 and A/47/573)

AGENDA ITEM 144: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY (A/47/242; A/C.2/47/2)

1. Mr. OMAYAD (Department of Political Affairs), speaking on agenda item 87 (b), introduced the report of the Secretary-General on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/47/573). He recalled General Assembly resolution 46/172 and said that the report described the actions taken by Member States and by organizations of the United Nations system pursuant to that resolution. Some of those efforts also reflected the special needs experienced by the front-line States as a result of the drought in the region.

2. Mr. ABU AUF (Sudan), speaking on agenda item 87 (b), said that unfair criticisms had been levelled against his country during the debate on the emergency situation in the Sudan. He pointed out that the emergency in his country was the result of many factors in operation since the mid-1980s, such as drought, floods, economic crisis and civil strife. Furthermore, the Sudan was a vast, least developed country with limited financial resources and a weak infrastructure.

3. In the light of those constraints and in response to the country's assistance needs, the Government had cooperated with the United Nations in elaborating Operation Lifeline Sudan to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those trapped in the war zones. During the visit by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to the Sudan earlier in the year, a joint statement had been issued by the Government and the United Nations reaffirming the Government's commitment to Operation Lifeline Sudan, and agreement had been reached on ensuring access to numerous destinations in the southern part of the country.

4. The conclusion in the report that there had been little improvement in the basic situation was inconsistent with the bulk of the information provided in the report. The deterioration of the situation in some areas had been due to in-fighting in the rebel movement, while other regrettable incidents, such as the death of expatriate relief workers, were bound to recur unless the conflict could be peacefully resolved. The Sudan therefore welcomed the efforts by the President of Nigeria to reactivate peace negotiations between the Government and the rebel factions, which should facilitate the access of relief efforts to those in need, allow the return of the war-displaced to their homes and release energies and resources for reconstruction and development efforts throughout the country.

(Mr. Abu Auf, Sudan)

5. Prospects for 1993 had been brightened by recent encouraging developments, such as the good grain harvest, estimated at 4 million to 5 million tons, with a surplus of 1 million tons, most of which would be exported in order to stabilize sorghum prices, encourage farmers to replant sorghum and earn hard currency necessary for essential agricultural inputs. The Sudan would not need to import grain in 1993 and had already donated 100,000 tons to the World Food Programme (WFP) for relief programmes in the country and abroad. Non-food assistance, supplementary feeding items and transport would, however, be needed for 1993, and efforts should be made to develop emergency recovery and rehabilitation programmes.

6. Internal displacement in the Sudan was the consequence of drought and other natural disasters but primarily of military hostilities in the southern part of the country, which had created large refugee settlements in the border zones between the northern and southern States. He regretted that his country's calls since 1988 for international help in resettling displaced persons in their places of origin had gone unheeded. The Government had developed a resettlement programme for displaced persons living around Khartoum and would require further assistance in resettling the war-displaced when the situation improved, as well as in reconstructing and rehabilitating the war-torn zones.

7. While some non-governmental organizations were doing good work, they had a negative attitude to all Governments and viewed the United Nations and its agencies as inefficient bureaucracies. Nevertheless, the Sudan recognized the useful role they played and cooperated with a number of such organizations, which were currently closely involved in Operation Lifeline Sudan and other emergency programmes and represented in all relief coordination bodies. His Government intended to continue its cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations.

8. A number of internationally prominent persons had visited the Sudan and diplomats based in Khartoum had travelled to emergency areas elsewhere in the country to gain first-hand information. The Government welcomed such visits in the belief that greater understanding and cooperation were essential if humanitarian assistance was to be provided in a timely and efficient manner, and it pledged its willingness to cooperate with the international community in carrying out that task, hoping, in return, to receive greater support and less unwarranted criticism.

9. Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe), speaking on agenda item 87 (b), said that during 1992 the southern African region had been afflicted by certain momentous and traumatic experiences, notably the drought, unparalleled in living memory, which would drastically reduce crop yields, threatening 18 million people with starvation and undermining the social and economic structures of several countries in the region. The drought's impact on the vulnerable sections of the population had assumed catastrophic proportions, while severe water shortages were affecting rural populations, schools,

(Mr. Msengezi, Zimbabwe)

hospitals and clinics and leading to an alarming increase in diarrhoeal and infectious diseases. The drought had decimated the regions livestock herd and had had severe consequences for wildlife-based tourism, biological diversity and opportunities for appropriate land management.

10. The already grim refugee situation in the region had been compounded, further weakening the economies of the countries affected. Meanwhile, most countries were implementing arduous structural adjustment programmes, which, in combination with the need to import large amounts of grain, were severely straining their economies and placing unprecedented demands on their transport and logistical infrastructures.

11. Zimbabwe commended the international community on its positive and generous response to the joint United Nations/Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) appeal and the operational and specialized agencies of the United Nations system on their coordinated and timely response to the disaster situation in the region. That response and the spirit of cooperation between the United Nations system and SADCC demonstrated the potential benefits of greater North-South understanding and cooperation. At the same time, Zimbabwe noted with disquiet the very slow conversion of pledges to actual disbursements or shipments and the slow and uneven response to the non-food requirements contained in the joint appeal. The complementarity between the region's food and non-food needs was vital. Moreover, as the passage from relief to rehabilitation and development was a continuum, he hoped that emergency assistance would support recovery and long-term development, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182.

12. The countries of southern Africa planned to establish a Southern African Development Community (SADC), dedicated to the goals of deeper economic cooperation and integration, freedom, social justice and peace and security for all the peoples of southern Africa, and hoped that the region would enjoy continued support and strengthened cooperation with the international community. The southern Africa of the future would need all the assistance possible from the international community to overcome the legacy of colonialism, racism and apartheid. The persistence of the apartheid system in South Africa would continue to aggravate the economic and social problems faced by the front-line and other neighbouring States. His delegation therefore called upon all concerned parties in South Africa to make every effort to resume the negotiation process, which, he hoped, would lead to the attainment of a non-racial and democratic South Africa and to peace and development throughout the region.

13. Ms. ASHRAF (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), speaking on agenda item 144, said that there was a clear relationship between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development and that the energies of all the organizations of the United Nations system should be channelled into the vital work of peace-building. The most

(Ms. Ashraf, UNESCO)

important tasks facing the Republic of Croatia were peace and reconstruction. Aware of the sufferings of the people of Croatia, the Executive Board of UNESCO had unanimously condemned the atrocities and violations of basic human rights committed in the former Yugoslavia. The Board had expressed strong support for actions carried out by UNESCO in coordination with other organizations of the United Nations system.

14. UNESCO, which sought to promote a culture of peace through its programmes, was receiving increasingly frequent appeals from parties to conflicts in different regions of the world to use its moral influence to explore new systems of mediation and to assist in the laying of foundations for reconciliation. Since such a role was completely new to the organization, it could perform it only in close collaboration and coordination with the United Nations.

15. The Director-General of UNESCO had recently sent an education mission to Croatia to gather information on the most urgent educational needs of children displaced by war. After holding discussions with national and international authorities and representatives of refugees, the mission was expected to propose appropriate forms of assistance to be undertaken by UNESCO in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to ensure the basic right to education of school-age refugees.

16. The United Nations system was gradually moving from mere coordination to genuine cooperation. The efforts of UNESCO over the past few years had sought to make a specific contribution to the renewed United Nations effort to build peace. What was needed now more than ever before was a dialogue and a well-planned coordinated strategy for assistance, rehabilitation and capacity-building.

17. Mr. NOBILO (Croatia), speaking on agenda item 144, said that as a result of the brutal invasion by Serbia, his country was facing one of the worst and most complex man-made crises in recent history, the consequences of which were spreading to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Prior to that aggression, Croatia had had rather good prospects for transition to a market economy. Serbia's aggression had resulted in thousands of deaths and millions of refugees and displaced persons, had destroyed nearly 40 per cent of the country's industrial capacity and had damaged a third of the road network while laying waste to bridges and hospitals and 200 highly prized cultural monuments.

18. The refugee problem, however, aggravated by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, placed the heaviest burden on the country's already fragile economy. While his delegation was grateful for the immense humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations agencies, programmes and Member States to all the countries of the former Yugoslavia, particularly Croatia, it

(Mr. Nobilo, Croatia)

believed that time was running out and that efforts needed to be focused on the problems of recovery. Indeed, the quick recovery of the Republic of Croatia could facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the reintegration of an ethnically diverse Croatia. His delegation therefore wished to make an urgent appeal to the United Nations and its Member States for assistance.

19. Mr. ASAHI (Japan), speaking on agenda item 144, said that his Government had actively participated in all the international community's efforts to bring about peace and political reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia. The Japanese Government was deeply troubled by the systematic violation of the human rights of innocent people and felt deep sympathy for those who had been forced to flee their homes as well as those who had been unable to escape from the war zones. His delegation appealed to all the parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and observe the cease-fire agreements, respect the basic human rights of all people and cooperate fully with UNHCR, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and other international organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance. He paid a special tribute to UNHCR, UNPROFOR, UNICEF, WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and commended the States members of the European Community and the United States of America for their valuable contributions to humanitarian relief activities.

20. For its part, the Government of Japan had, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 770 (1992), contributed $18.5 million towards emergency relief supplies to help civilians survive the coming winter. In addition, Japan's private sector had raised over $1 million to aid victims of the violence in the former Yugoslavia.

21. The case of the former Yugoslavia illustrated both the potential of humanitarian action and the extent to which it was linked to peace-keeping and peacemaking activities. He renewed his Government's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to those in need and to cooperating in the concerted efforts of the international community to that end.

22. Speaking on agenda item 87, he noted that the United Nations and SADCC had held a joint United Nations/SADCC pledging conference at Geneva in June 1992 for humanitarian relief to those suffering from the effects of the drought in southern Africa. His Government had provided a total of $110 million in bilateral emergency humanitarian assistance to nine southern African countries and had extended another $60 million in debt relief and medical and rehabilitation projects to a number of countries in the region. In addition, it had extended, through WFP, aid totalling 1 billion yen to refugees, displaced persons and the local population in drought-ravaged countries.

23. The Government of Japan supported the endeavours of African nations to meet the challenges arising from the difficult transition to democracy and

(Mr. Asahi, Japan)

free-market economies and had therefore offered to join the Global Coalition for Africa in sponsoring an international conference on development in Africa, to be held in Tokyo, with a view to sensitizing the international community to the need for understanding and support for development in Africa.

24. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation), speaking on agenda item 144, said that his delegation supported the international community's readiness to provide assistance to Croatia in order to alleviate the consequences of war and facilitate its recovery. In the future, similar humanitarian action could be extended to other republics of the former Yugoslavia whose economies had suffered significant damage. In the short term, international assistance must focus on efforts to bring about an early settlement of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia by political means, and on ending all forms of confrontation. The Security Council, together with other relevant international mechanisms, was already taking the necessary steps in that regard.

25. The Russian Federation planned to contribute to the recovery of Croatia's war-ravaged economy principally through bilateral cooperation. In view of the fact that a number of sectors of the Croatian economy had formerly been geared to exports to his country, the Russian Federation and Croatia were now taking joint steps to restore the ties that had been disrupted by the war and the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A solid basis had been laid for further development of Russian-Croatian economic cooperation with the signature in August 1992 of an agreement between the two countries on trade and economic cooperation and a protocol on commodity circulation for 1992.

26. Mr. RAGUZ (Bosnia and Herzegovina), speaking on agenda item 144, said that, as a fellow victim of Serbian aggression, his country understood the need to rebuild the economy and infrastructure of nations that had faced such tragedies. His delegation was particularly concerned at the situation in Croatia, a country which, in spite of its own tribulations, had demonstrated the strong and historical friendship between the two Republics by absorbing more than 500,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

27. Some 12 per cent of Croatia's entire housing stock had been razed or irreparably damaged. Deliveries of humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of Croatia had been severely impeded by the destruction of roads and bridges. Most of the 20,000 or more persons wounded during the war in Croatia could not receive adequate treatment because of the destruction of hospitals and health care units. Educational facilities, cultural monuments and churches had also been damaged or destroyed in the efforts of Serbia and Montenegro to erase any Croatian presence. His delegation fully understood the impact of the destruction of infrastructure and deplored the apparent absence of resolute action to end the devastation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it looked with optimism to a time when both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina would be rebuilt, and it wholeheartedly endorsed the actions called for in the draft resolution on the reconstruction of Croatia.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution on privatization (A/C.2/47/L.23)

28. Mrs. von ECKARTSBERG (United States of America) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.23 on behalf of the sponsors.

Draft resolution on implications of the application of the new criteria for identifying the least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (A/C.2/47/L.34)

29. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. The Group hoped that, in the ensuing informal consultations a text commanding consensus could be agreed upon.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on strengthening international organizations in the area of multilateral trade (A/C.2/47/L.31)

30. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. The Group hoped that the Committee would be able to endorse the draft resolution unanimously following informal consultations.

Draft resolution on specific measures in favour of island developing countries (A/C.2/47/L.33)

31. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. The sponsors hoped that during informal consultations it would be possible to arrive at a consensus text that could be unanimously endorsed.

AGENDA ITEM 86: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FINANCING OF DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft decision on financing of development (A/C.2/47/L.27)

32. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), introducing the draft decision on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77, said that the Group had already presented its views on the question in a previous statement. It attached importance to further exploration of the possibilities for convening such an international conference and favoured retaining the item on the agenda of the Committee at its next session.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
41st meeting
held on
Tuesday, 17 November 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Chairman)	(Uruguay)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

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8 December 1992
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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that because of the late publication of the relevant documents, the consideration of agenda item 90 would have to be delayed until the morning of Thursday, 19 November, and suggested that in the light of that change, the Committee should begin its consideration of agenda item 78 (b) on the morning of Wednesday, 18 November.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (A/47/14, and A/47/458)

3. Mr. JENSEN (Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Public Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (A/47/458), which paid particular attention to the need to consolidate training as a means to meet the challenges facing the United Nations and to revitalize the Organization. In response to General Assembly resolution 46/180, the Secretary-General had arranged for UNITAR's activities to be focused on training, had abolished the post of Under-Secretary-General and had appointed the Director of the European Office as Acting Executive Director.

4. UNITAR had for several years been experiencing serious financial difficulties, and now owed the United Nations more than $10 million. The Secretary-General had come to the conclusion that the best course would be for the United Nations to take over the UNITAR building in New York, in return for cancellation of the debt. As a result, the headquarters of UNITAR would be transferred to Geneva. That would permit the establishment of a close relationship between UNITAR and the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, which could accommodate UNITAR's training activities.

5. The phasing out of the UNITAR office in New York would not affect the training activities in multilateral diplomacy at Headquarters, which would continue to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. Arrangements would also be made to continue the other training programmes, in particular those relating to peace-keeping, in coordination with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

6. The Secretary-General had carried out a survey of the various United Nations institutes for training and research, and intended to continue it in the context of the current review of the structures of the Secretariat.

7. Mr. BOISARD (Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) said that the statistics contained in his

(Mr. Boisard)

report (A/47/14) showed that in the past two years nearly 100 different programmes had been launched in some 30 countries in different parts of the world, involving participation by approximately 3,500 people. While the immediate future of UNITAR could also be considered from the point of view of institutional structure or financial imperatives, he proposed to confine himself to programmes. The results were generally satisfactory, for two reasons: firstly, the ever-greater priority being assigned to the development of human resources through training in the process of economic and social development; and secondly, UNITAR's success in creating an original and innovative concept of training. Before programmes were undertaken, they were subjected to an in-depth feasibility study, and a conceptual framework and a pertinent training methodology were proposed. The United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies were then called upon to make contributions. That methodology had been successfully followed for five years in the programmes financed by special-purpose grants, which in the course of 1992 had mobilized 10 times more resources than the UNITAR General Fund. After 1993, which would be a year of transition, UNITAR would have to operate within the strict limits of the funds it could mobilize, and would have to circumscribe future programmes and focus them to a greater extent on urgent training needs.

8. As in the past, those programmes had to concentrate on fields such as training in diplomacy and negotiation, including settlement of disputes in the economic, commercial, political or environmental field; training for economic and social development; training in the management of environmental and natural resources; training of diplomats in the use of data systems; and training in certain aspects of peace-keeping.

9. With regard to financing and management, a very clear distinction would be drawn between two broad categories of programmes. Those charged to the UNITAR General Fund would remain open to the nationals of all States. The corresponding budgets would be presented to the Board of Trustees, and, if necessary, to the relevant administrative and budgetary organs of the United Nations, as appropriate. On the other hand, the training programmes for economic and social development would continue to be implemented at the request of developing countries in response to well-defined needs, and financing would be provided through multilateral, regional or bilateral development cooperation. A separate programme of work would be prepared and submitted for approval to the UNITAR Board of Trustees, together with detailed budgets for each project. All of that would be undertaken with the cooperation of units and institutes of the United Nations system, as appropriate.

10. There was a need to consider three paradoxical aspects of UNITAR's current difficult situation. Firstly, while special-purpose grants continued to increase, the resources of the General Fund were decreasing. Secondly, Member States expected UNITAR to undertake ever more programmes but gave it ever less money. Thirdly, there was a glaring contrast between the number of

(Mr. Boisard)

States whose nationals were participating in the programmes and the number who were making financial contributions.

11. As a result of the progressive decentralization of its activities, UNITAR had begun a long-term action designed to train trainers and set up networks of specialists. The way ahead was arduous, and there was little time left in which to solve the difficulties; but the Institute would take up the challenge, for it was aware of the urgency of training needs.

12. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

13. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan) was concerned that in his report the Secretary-General suggested the complete elimination of the UNITAR New York office, for the activities of the Institute, especially those relating to the training of diplomats in New York and Geneva, had been of great benefit to the developing countries. It would be advisable to retain a small office in New York, which would also provide liaison with Headquarters, so as not to discontinue that training completely.

14. As research was one of the original aims of UNITAR, it must not be overlooked in the current process of restructuring and reform. At the same time, the Institute should be the centre for coordination of training activities in the United Nations system.

15. The main impact of activities carried out by UNITAR was felt at country level; training activities should thus be decentralized not towards Turin, but towards the field level, to the benefit of the developing countries. Centralization in Turin would undermine the independent nature of the work done by UNITAR, and would lead to higher costs for the developing countries, particularly in connection with travel and subsistence allowances.

16. Stringent economic measures were needed to address the situation of UNITAR. His delegation agreed with the decision to downgrade the Executive Director's post to D-2 level and to close down the New York office.

17. The Institute must continue to enjoy some limited subsidy from the United Nations regular budget, as well as voluntary contributions and special purpose grants, as proposed by the high-level consultant.

18. Mrs. HELKE (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, supported many of the conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General, including the proposal to hand over the UNITAR building in New York to the United Nations. UNITAR must concentrate its efforts on training activities, and its financial problems must be resolved. The question of the long-term future of the Institute must be addressed, for it could not be left in a continued State of uncertainty and with a constantly growing debt.

(Mrs. Helke, United Kingdom)

19. The Institute must attract the voluntary contributions necessary fully to fund its activities, which must continue to meet the needs of member States. The grants provided by member States to fund UNITAR operations in Geneva fulfilled that function; she thus endorsed the proposal that the Institute should move to Geneva. In future, activities undertaken away from Geneva would have to be fully funded from voluntary contributions.

20. The European Community and its member States also agreed that UNITAR should continue to cooperate closely with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) International Training Centre at Turin, provided that such cooperation was cost-effective and respected both bodies' respective fields of competence. She welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to make arrangements to ensure that the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy undertaken by UNITAR were not discontinued.

21. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon) said that the previous year the General Assembly had adopted resolution 46/180, on transitional measures concerning the terms of reference of UNITAR. Since then, the post of Executive Director had been downgraded to D-2 level and the Institute's programmes had been decentralized. The programmes should continue, and the decentralization of activities and strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation were to be welcomed. His delegation repeated the proposal to establish cooperation relations between UNITAR and the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon.

22. With regard to the financial situation of UNITAR, the Institute lacked a sound and predictable source of financing; hence its debt of more than $10 million. That situation jeopardized the development of programmes and gave rise to uncertainty regarding the Institute's future.

23. His delegation supported the proposal by the Secretary-General to transfer the building occupied by the UNITAR New York office to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the debt and coverage of the financial obligations for 1992, provided that that operation was accompanied by other financial provisions to bring about the transition in 1993.

24. It was to be hoped that the Institute's move to Geneva would not have an adverse effect on the training programmes for accredited diplomats in New York and others. He supported the recommendation by the Board of Trustees of UNITAR that the New York office should be transformed into a small operational office responsible for provision of that training.

25. With regard to cooperation between UNITAR and the ILO International Centre at Turin, his delegation hoped that the transfer of some UNITAR activities to the Turin Centre would not lead to the cancellation of programmes for the developing countries.

26. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) reaffirmed the unique role of UNITAR and the relevance of its mandate. The Institute had carried out programmes in the spheres of multilateral diplomacy, international cooperation and economic and social development, and Member States had increasing recourse to its services for the training of their officials. A process of "triangular" cooperation had begun to develop between the developing countries interested in the training of their officials, the industrialized countries that finance the programmes, and UNITAR itself. The concrete outcome had been the seminar on development issues organized by UNITAR and the World Bank Economic Development Institute. But institutional and financial difficulties persisted, difficulties which prevented the Institute from utilizing its full capacity.

27. At the recommendation of the independent high-level consultant, a thorough reform aimed at revitalization had been undertaken. The post of Executive Director had been downgraded, and the Institute's activities now focused on the sphere of training, so as to avoid overlapping with the activities of other institutes.

28. One of the most serious problems for UNITAR was its outstanding debt to the United Nations. His delegation felt that the proposed transfer of the UNITAR office building in New York to the United Nations in exchange for cancellation of the debt would be appropriate. The recommendations in the report, however, went considerably further, and the question was whether, even though the report of the Secretary-General indicated that the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy organized by UNITAR in New York would be continued under the auspices of the United Nations, the mandates of Secretariat bodies allowed them to conduct activities for which they seemed to have neither the experience nor the necessary resources. The choice of the Turin Centre to centralize training activities raised the issue of whether it would be equipped to initiate and organize specialized training programmes. Furthermore, the move to Turin of diplomats and participants from developing countries could create more problems than it solved. In his delegation's view, the required reform presupposed that UNITAR would continue to exist in a different form adapted to the new circumstances.

29. As to the financing of UNITAR, its administrative expenses should be covered by the regular budget of the United Nations, and training activities should be funded through voluntary contributions. The Institute should have adequate premises in New York as well as in Geneva, because it was necessary to maintain a small unit in New York.

30. Mr. OLISEMEKA (Nigeria) observed that UNITAR continued to generate great interest and to enjoy the support of a large number of Member States, which testified to the part it had played in assisting developing countries. It had, for example, cooperated with countries like Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam in the training of their diplomats.

31. General Assembly resolution 46/180 of 19 December 1991 indicated the need to put UNITAR on a firm and predictable financial footing, after having taken

(Mr. Olisemeka, Nigeria)

the requisite interim measures, and acknowledged the sad financial position of UNITAR since the beginning of the 1970s. There had been a deficit in the Institute's General Fund budget for 15 years, and the Institute was still facing serious financial difficulties, with an accumulated debt of over $10 million. However, the financial crisis affected only the General Fund, which had continued to dwindle while special purpose grants had steadily grown.

32. The UNITAR records showed that in the 26 years of its operation, only 55 Governments had made voluntary contributions to the General Fund in any given year, while approximately 8,000 persons had participated in its research seminars and nearly 16,000 had attended its conferences and round tables. It was therefore paradoxical that many Member States were willing to avail themselves of the services of UNITAR but were reluctant to help its work.

33. After having reviewed the reports of the high-level independent consultant (A/46/482, annex), the Board of Trustees of UNITAR (A/46/619) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/46/624), his delegation fully endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/47/458), especially the proposals that the United Nations should take over the UNITAR building in return for cancellation of the debt and coverage of the financial obligations for 1992, and that there should be a phased transfer to Geneva of the Institute. It also welcomed the proposal to associate the UNITAR in Geneva with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Training Centre in Turin in order to develop an enhanced capacity for inter-agency training programmes. Nevertheless, that question required careful scrutiny, in order to ensure that UNITAR services would not be compromised by its association with the Turin Centre.

34. While welcoming the proposal to move UNITAR headquarters to Geneva, Nigeria agreed that it was necessary to maintain an operational training unit in New York in order to continue certain activities in the city.

35. On the other hand, as regarded the proposal to transfer various New York-based programmes to the competent Secretariat offices, it should be noted that such programmes could be carried out with fewer restrictions under the UNITAR Statute than they could be if they were implemented by the Secretariat.

36. With respect to the financial provisions for a restructured UNITAR, his delegation favoured funding the UNITAR administrative budget and training programme in future from voluntary contributions, special purpose grants and executing-agency overheads, while the cost of training programmes conducted at the specific request of United Nations bodies and agencies should be covered by the requesting organization.

37. In conclusion, he praised the work of UNITAR and reaffirmed Nigeria's full support for it.

38. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

39. Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) said that the report of the Secretary-General on UNITAR (A/47/458) highlighted various issues related to the necessary reform of the Institute, like the need to rationalize its activities and make more effective and careful use of the scarce financial resources at its disposal. Those questions had become crucial in view of the critical condition of the UNITAR General Fund and the system of voluntary contributions.

40. The role UNITAR played in the area of training made it necessary to find an overall solution to the current situation. The experience of the past year showed that hope should not be placed in generous voluntary contributions, but rather that new sources of funding had to be found. The Russian Federation consequently supported the proposal to transfer the UNITAR headquarters to Geneva and hand over its building to the Secretariat. Another possibility that should be studied would be to lease the building for an extended period so that the UNITAR debt could be absorbed gradually in the regular budget of the United Nations.

41. As to funding the ongoing activities of the Institute, the Russian Federation had on other occasions expressed its opposition to replenishing the UNITAR General Fund from the regular budget of the United Nations. Such steps to "save" UNITAR were not compatible with the Institute's status as an autonomous body, which must be funded exclusively through voluntary contributions.

42. The problems the Institute was experiencing and its shortcomings should not cause the achievements of the last few years to be forgotten. The new administrators of UNITAR had promoted innovative measures that took into account the current situation and practical needs of Member States; an example was the subprogramme that UNITAR would introduce in 1993, on the diplomacy of multilateral conferences for representatives of various countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

43. In conclusion, he emphasized that it was not possible to continue deferring practical action on restructuring UNITAR, but that specific solutions had to be found immediately.

44. Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland) said that he shared the views of previous speakers, especially the idea that UNITAR should focus on training programmes and training-related research; that the management of UNITAR must be improved while ensuring the efficiency of its operations; and that its activities must be financed through voluntary contributions. The transfer of UNITAR to Geneva would be a good way of achieving those objectives.

45. Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines), recalling that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) had been founded to give professional training to diplomats and international civil servants, said that diplomats could not depend for their knowledge exclusively on such classical writers as Grotius and Hobbes but needed to be familiar with many modern disciplines such

(Mr. Guerrero, Philippines)

as the processes of economic growth, social development and peace-keeping. Legions of diplomats, particularly from the developing world, had been trained by UNITAR. However, the problems that had plagued the Institute in recent years had led many to believe it had outlived its usefulness and become a superfluous organization in the United Nations system.

46. Almost since its foundation, UNITAR had faced the difficulty of being funded from voluntary contributions alone. Government contributions had declined, so that, despite drastic budget cuts, the Institute's debt had increased; in 1991, the deficit had exceeded $700,000, while in 1992 it was close to $500,000.

47. At the forty-sixth session, his delegation had supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General's independent consultant on UNITAR, including the suggestions that UNITAR research activities should be limited to those areas where it enjoyed comparative advantage, and that a specific allocation from the regular budget should be granted to a restructured UNITAR. Having stressed the need for reform at that session, his delegation now welcomed the interim measures that had been taken towards such reform.

48. In August 1992, the UNITAR Board of Trustees had accepted the options suggested by the Secretary-General, including the purchase of the Institute's headquarters, in order to cancel its debt, and the transfer of its headquarters to Geneva. The Philippine member of the Board of Trustees had joined its consensus decisions, although he had indicated some reservations concerning the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva, which reservations his delegation now reiterated. If UNITAR remained in New York, it could maintain a core staff with more limited but more specialized functions, whereas if it was transferred to Geneva, it would in practice be dependent on the International Training Centre at Turin and would therefore become superfluous.

49. Mr. LICHEM (Austria) said it was regrettable that, at a time when there seemed to be a greater need than ever for UNITAR, it should be in a profound and almost irreparable crisis.

50. UNITAR had not been created to dispense just any type of training. Rather, it had been dedicated to improving the professional capacity of international civil servants and diplomats. There was a need to improve the management capabilities of the United Nations and to find ways to improve intersectoral analysis, assessment and policy-making on issues related to sustainable development.

51. There would be no improvement in the performance of the United Nations Secretariat unless modern management concepts were assimilated by Secretariat staff at all levels of responsibility. There was a need, also, to research which management approach would be most suitable for the United Nations. How could those needs be met when there was talk of scaling down, eliminating or moving UNITAR? It might be useful to distinguish between its different

(Mr. Lichem, Austria)

training functions, assess their interrelatedness and only then determine the institutional framework that would provide the best and most cost-efficient response to those needs.

52. First, training programmes for developing countries related to specific technical issues of development were required. Such programmes should be financed from the various technical assistance funds, including UNDP.

53. Secondly, training for junior and middle-level staff and diplomats should be provided, particularly for the lower levels, at the headquarters of the international organizations concerned, if possible on the basis of voluntary financing.

54. Thirdly, training programmes for senior-level staff on intersectoral global issues, on management and on long-term institutional development of the United Nations system should be offered by a central United Nations entity.

55. The research capabilities of UNITAR had never been fully utilized. There was a proven need for conducting research within the United Nations. There was in addition a broader issue of research relating to the increasingly important role of science in multilateral decision-making.

56. Only a few institutions possessed the capability to provide international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary analyses of global issues. Cooperation with those institutions should be strengthened and put on a permanent footing.

57. There was a pressing need to obtain now the institutional quality required to respond to the issues of today and even more so of tomorrow.

58. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that, ever since its founding, UNITAR had done a great deal of work in vocational training and research. That contribution had helped officials to improve their effective participation in multilateral activities. Therefore, she agreed with the Secretary-General's idea, put forward in his report, that training activities in the United Nations system should be strengthened.

59. The Institute's debt had long remained an outstanding problem. Accordingly, her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the UNITAR building in New York should be handed over to the United Nations, its New York office phased out and its headquarters transferred to Geneva.

60. With regard to the proposed establishment of an association between the Geneva-based Institute and the International Labour Organisation International Training Centre in Italy, consideration of that question was premature and should await the commencement of the Institute's work at Geneva.

(Ms. Yang Yanyi, China)

61. The annual training programmes in multilateral diplomacy undertaken by UNITAR in New York were meaningful and had benefited many Member States, especially those from the developing world. It was to be hoped that that function would not be adversely affected by the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva.

62. Her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNITAR training activities should continue to be financed through voluntary contributions and special-purpose grants. China had always attached great importance and lent support to the Institute's work. It had also taken an active part in many UNITAR training programmes. The Chinese Government had decided to pledge to the Institute a contribution of $10,000 for the year 1993.

63. Ms. ADAMSON (Australia) said that her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's view that in the context of a revitalized United Nations, it would be essential to enhance training opportunities. It also endorsed the Secretary-General's remarks on training in his statement on the international civil service to the Fifth Committee on 6 November 1992.

64. She drew the Committee's attention to the work being undertaken at the current session in the General Assembly and several of the main Committees on preventive diplomacy in the context of the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). In his statement during the general debate, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade had called for a strengthened capacity within the United Nations to encourage and assist parties to disputes to resolve their differences peacefully. As evidence of Australia's conviction of the value of training in preventive diplomacy, he had announced a contribution of US$ 50,000 to a new fellowship programme in preventive diplomacy which UNITAR was planning to launch in 1993. She urged other Member States which were committed to the principles of preventive diplomacy to join Australia in supporting that programme.

65. Her delegation also attached importance to the provision by UNITAR of training programmes which helped the representatives of Member States to participate effectively in the multilateral process. Australia was pleased that UNITAR had begun providing training in the use of information technology and access to United Nations data banks and hoped that such activities would continue.

66. Her delegation was also pleased that the Secretary-General had made a set of specific recommendations aimed at resolving the financial difficulties of UNITAR. Although her delegation supported in principle the general thrust of those recommendations, it reserved the right to comment further when the recommendations in respect of the Institute's debt were addressed by the appropriate bodies.

67. Mr. HURLEY (United States of America) praised the Secretary-General on his action to abolish the post of Under-Secretary-General of UNITAR in February 1992. His delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's call

(Mr. Hurley, United States)

for the training activities of UNITAR to be funded through voluntary contributions and special-purpose grants as called for in the Institute's statutes.

68. Concerning the recommendation to transfer UNITAR to Geneva, his delegation believed that a thorough assessment should be undertaken of all potential costs involved in such a transfer. Such costs should first take into consideration the Secretary-General's recommendation that serious staff reduction and redeployment be undertaken.

69. Regarding the Institute's debt, his delegation was opposed to the allocation of any regular budget funds to fund UNITAR; such objection included 1992 obligations of the Institute, the cancellation of its debt and any transitional period costs.

70. Finally, although the United States recognized that UNITAR was going through a critical period, it would be a mistake to continue to prop up an institute with United Nations funds.

71. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) asked whether the UNITAR Board of Trustees had endorsed the Secretary-General's report. He also sought clarification on the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva and thence to Turin and asked which activities would be transferred to Turin. In his opinion, a more thorough consideration should be given to the issue of transferring UNITAR to Geneva.

72. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt), referring to the reports contained in documents A/47/458 and A/47/14, said that steps must be taken immediately to resolve the financial difficulties facing UNITAR; in his opinion, the Institute's debt of $10 million stemmed from the reluctance of Member States to pay their contributions as long as the uncertainty with respect to the Institute's future status remained. His delegation appreciated the Institute's training activities in multilateral diplomacy, especially those carried out in New York, and the training provided in economic and social development and the special programmes and advisory services. He stressed, in particular, the crucial role played by UNITAR in the organization of seminars together with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank in Washington.

73. Egypt considered it important to maintain a UNITAR office in New York in order to continue with those activities. For its part, Egypt was prepared to consider the proposal contained in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/458); it was an appropriate manner of resolving the Institute's debt problem and ensuring the discharge of its obligations. The Funding mechanisms of UNITAR and of the United Nations system as a whole must be diversified in order to achieve stability; they should include financial contributions, subsidies from the regular budget and grants.

74. Mrs. SCOTT (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), underscored the importance that those countries attached to the development of human resources, through education and training, as a means of achieving real economic progress; they recognized the work the Institute had done over the years through its wide range of multidisciplinary training programmes, and noted the increased reliance on inter-agency cooperation and on decentralization, which had resulted in courses being held at the country and subregional levels.

75. She wondered how the needs of Member States and their permanent missions as well as those of the Secretariat would be met if the New York office was phased out. Although mention had been made of the intention to continue providing the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy under the auspices of the United Nations no definite information had been provided in that respect and the CARICOM countries doubted whether the same quality and quantity of programmes which the Institute provided as an autonomous body could be maintained.

76. In regard to the proposal to establish close relations with the International Labour Organisation's International Training Centre with a view to carrying out the bulk of UNITAR training activities at that Centre, the CARICOM delegations wondered how such an association would fill the gaps that the proposed transfer would leave; they wondered, in particular, how their permanent missions could avail themselves of the programmes which were supposed to be designed for them, whether the appropriate resources had been identified to facilitate such access or whether other scenarios had been envisaged.

77. The CARICOM delegations questioned the assumption that voluntary contributions would be forthcoming for UNITAR if it were transferred elsewhere. The problems of the Institute stemmed from financial uncertainty and adjustments in its mandate and location did not appear to be an appropriate solution.

78. Mr. KOLKE (Japan) said that his country had long appreciated the Institute's work which had benefited developing countries in particular; in recognition of that contribution, his country had consistently supported the Institute's activities by contributing US$ 100,000 every year to UNITAR. Urgent action must be taken to eliminate the huge debt which UNITAR owed the United Nations.

79. With regard to its research programmes, his delegation was of the view that the current review should be continued and that the possibility of totally discontinuing the Institute's activities should not be excluded in the light of the extensive research activities carried out by other United Nations bodies and possible duplication.

80. With regard to the Secretary-General's report (A/47/458), his delegation supported the recommendation that UNITAR training activities should be funded

(Mr. Kolke, Japan)

through voluntary contributions and special-purpose grants. It also supported the proposal to transfer UNITAR to Geneva and to discontinue all training activities in New York except those relating to multilateral diplomacy. While agreeing that the Institute's training programmes should be continued in Geneva in cooperation with the ILO International Training Centre, it believed that the role of the Geneva office and the relationship between the two institutions should be clarified, and it therefore requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its next session on the arrangements that would be necessary to ensure cooperation and on the impact that such new cooperation might have on the resources and facilities of the Turin Centre.

81. With respect to training programmes in multilateral diplomacy, his delegation agreed that they should be continued under the auspices of the United Nations and should, in principle, be funded through voluntary contributions. It welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to undertake a comprehensive review in the context of the ongoing restructuring of the Secretariat. In that connection, the possibility of transferring the research activities of UNITAR to the United Nations University should be seriously considered.

82. Japan endorsed the Secretary-General's conclusion that the United Nations should take over the UNITAR building in New York in return for the cancellation of its debt of over $10 million.

83. Mr. NYAMIKEH (Ghana) recalled that, in its resolution 46/180, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the problem of the Institute's debt, dealing with such issues as terms of reference, programmes, funding, rationalization, location, possibilities and solutions. The Committee had that report before it in document A/47/458.

84. Although the Secretary-General had downgraded the post of the head of the Institute to Executive Director and had concluded that the best way to resolve the debt problem was for the United Nations to take over the UNITAR building in New York in exchange for cancellation of its debt and coverage of its 1992 financial obligations, in the opinion of his delegation, he had ignored many of the requests contained in the resolution, such as those relating to collaboration with the Board of Trustees, consultations with Governments in the preparation of the report and the feasibility of utilizing the Institute for peace-keeping operations.

85. Instead of an analysis, the Secretary-General had presented various conclusions regarding the solution to the debt problem, such as transferring the New York office to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the debt, relocating UNITAR to Geneva and establishing close relations with the International Training Centre at Turin.

(Mr. Nyamikeh, Ghana)

86. Before deciding to transfer a scaled-down UNITAR to Geneva, the General Assembly should consider what arrangements could be made to continue its programmes, which were of great benefit to the developing countries. Year after year, the mandate of the Institute was reaffirmed, but it was not provided with adequate financial resources, despite the fact that the programmes and activities of UNITAR received praise from all the countries. His delegation appealed to the countries that had stopped contributing to UNITAR to begin doing so again.

87. Two reports had been issued in response to General Assembly resolution 46/180. The first report, of which advance copies had been distributed, had been faithful to the spirit and letter of the resolution. That report had mysteriously disappeared, only to be replaced by the one contained in document A/47/458, which was totally unacceptable to his delegation since it did not respond to the terms of reference defined in the resolution.

88. The report did not indicate how the other units of the Secretariat could perform the Institute's functions. Reforming UNITAR should make it possible for the basic costs of certain staff and other administrative expenses to be absorbed under the regular budget of the United Nations. The transfer of some UNITAR training activities to the ILO Centre at Turin also had budgetary implications.

89. His delegation proposed that the Secretary-General should be authorized to complete the task assigned to him in General Assembly resolution 46/180 and should report on his analysis and recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In the meantime, the United Nations should continue to cover the administrative costs of the Institute under the regular budget.

90. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that his delegation had reviewed the options presented in the Secretary-General's report on UNITAR (A/47/458) and was open to any proposals that might result from the current discussions. However, in view of the rapidly changing international landscape, the Institute's training function was indispensable and should be enhanced, not curtailed. Thus, while his delegation did not oppose rationalization, it considered it imperative for UNITAR to maintain a presence in New York, especially in the field of training and training-oriented research. In the current era of fundamental change, the United Nations needed institutions like UNITAR that made it possible to increase the effectiveness and negotiating capabilities of Member States. In that context, his delegation welcomed the decision to expand UNITAR training activities to encompass the field of peace-keeping and peacemaking.

91. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that, although many developing countries, including Colombia, had benefited from UNITAR, the question was not whether those benefits should continue to be provided, but what it cost to provide them and what administrative structure would do so best. It was necessary to distinguish between the functions to be performed by the Secretariat and the

(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

structure of the Secretariat, and to question whether its current structure was the most appropriate one. His delegation supported the proposals in the Secretary-General's report for restructuring UNITAR within a general context of administrative efficiency and financial feasibility.

92. Discussions of the functions to be performed by the organs of the United Nations tended to end with the conclusion that there was no money for those functions; when that happened the question to be asked was: what were the opportunity costs? The best way for an institution such as UNITAR to fulfil its duty to the developing countries was for it to carry out its training work in the field, in other words, to provide on-the-job training in the countries themselves.

93. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to associate UNITAR with the ILO International Training Centre at Turin and to fund those activities from voluntary contributions, although it regretted that the Institute's debt should have to be absorbed under the regular budget of the Organization.

94. The CHAIRMAN said that, at the next meeting of the Committee, the Executive Director of UNITAR and the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, would respond to the delegation's various comments regarding the agenda item under consideration.

The meeting rose at 6.06 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
42nd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 18 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay), Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution on the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women (A/C.2/47/L.39)

1. Mr. SLEEUWAGEN (Belgium), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, recalled that the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women had adopted the Geneva Declaration for Rural Women, which stressed the importance of taking account of the role of rural women as economic agents and active members of society in the formulation of development strategies. The Summit had also established a follow-up mechanism to ensure the application of that principle. The sponsors hoped that the draft would receive the widest possible support.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/47/L.30 and L.32)

Draft resolution on the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (A/C.2/47/L.30)

2. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on commodities (A/C.2/47/L.32)

3. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and said she hoped that the Committee would be able to adopt it by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/C.2/47/L.20, L.25/Rev.1, L.28, L.36 and L.37)

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of El Salvador (A/C.2/47/L.25/Rev.1)

4. Mr. TATTENBACH (Costa Rica), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that the armed conflict in El Salvador had claimed 70,000 lives and had destroyed much of the country's infrastructure. The international community should therefore provide material assistance and moral support for the reconstruction and development of El Salvador. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution on assistance to Benin, the Central African Republic and Madagascar (A/C.2/47/L.28)

5. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Guinea-Bissau, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Suriname, Togo and Yemen. The serious economic crises of the countries targeted in the draft resolution had been exacerbated by natural disasters, and the assistance made available to them thus far had been inadequate. The resolution appealed to all those concerned to increase their assistance in response to the reconstruction and development needs of those countries, and he hoped that it would receive the broadest possible support from the Committee.

Draft resolution on emergency assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia (A/C.2/47/L.36)

6. Mrs. HASSAN (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by India, Oman and Singapore, said that she hoped the draft would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on economic assistance to Vanuatu (A/C.2/47/L.37)

7. Mr. ASHE (Antigua and Barbuda) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, who had been joined by Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Comoros, Cyprus, Djibouti, Fiji, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Suriname, Swaziland, Uganda, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. He called upon Member States that had not sponsored the draft resolution to assist Vanuatu in its time of need.

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti (A/C.2/47/L.20)

8. The CHAIRMAN announced that Burkina Faso and Mali had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (continued) (A/47/458)

9. Mr. HAMMARSKJOLD (Sweden) said that one of the most useful activities carried out by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) had been its pilot programme for training in peace-keeping operations, and Sweden had therefore welcomed the reference to that programme in General Assembly resolution 46/180. In planning organizational changes in UNITAR, careful consideration must be given to ways of optimizing the Institute's experience in that valuable area.

10. Mr. JENSEN (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that broad support had been expressed for the Secretary-General's proposals on UNITAR during the Committee's debate, in particular the proposal for resolving the Institute's debt problem by transferring ownership of the building in New York to the United Nations. In response to specific points raised at the previous meeting, he confirmed that the consultations called for in General Assembly resolution 46/180 had in fact taken place: in early 1992 a letter had been addressed to all Member States, the appropriate United Nations bodies had been consulted and the UNITAR Board of Trustees had reviewed the Secretary-General's proposals. All the views received had been taken into account in preparing the Secretary-General's report.

11. While the Secretary-General was committed to the need to provide training, he had also to work within severe financial constraints. The Secretary-General intended to continue training programmes in New York on multilateral diplomacy and peace-keeping, the precise modalities of which would be worked out in due course. The specific division of responsibilities between Geneva and the International Labour Organisation's International Training Centre at Turin also had to be determined. The Turin Centre had been chosen because it was the only campus in the United Nations system and its resources were not being fully utilized. The existing inter-agency programmes at Turin were consistent with the mandate of UNITAR in the economic and social sector and would not detract from the Institute's training activities in the field.

12. General Assembly resolution 42/197 had recommended the sale of the UNITAR building so that the proceeds could be used to repay the Institute's debt, with the balance retained as a reserve fund. Unfavourable market conditions had thus far militated against that course of action, and the only realistic option appeared to be that proposed by the Secretary-General, which was fully consistent with the recommendations of the high-level consultant.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(b) FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/47/19 and Add.1, A/47/395)

13. Mr. LIFANCHIKOV (World Food Council) said that the eighteenth session of the World Food Council, held at Nairobi earlier in the year, had focused on the deterioration of the food supply in Africa as a result of the drought and had concluded that African agriculture required more effective and sustained assistance, particularly technical assistance. The session had also considered the potential for a "green revolution" in the developing countries and consultations in that regard were currently under way between the Council secretariat and numerous international and national institutions. Close consideration had also been given to the problem of migration and food security, and the secretariat was currently elaborating appropriate policies and carefully monitoring events in that area.

(Mr. Lifanchikov)

14. Recent changes in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had caused some developing countries to fear that food resources might be diverted to the Eastern European region. While food supplies in that region had declined, there was no danger of famine, and the Council had established that the volume of grain and other food imports in those countries had even declined and so would not have a significant impact on the amount of food assistance provided to the developing countries in 1992.

15. There had been consensus at Nairobi that, despite a number of achievements, the Council had been unable to attain all its objectives and its future should therefore be reviewed in the context of the reforms currently taking place within the Organization. To that end, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council had been established to prepare proposals on enhancing the effectiveness of the Council's work. The Committee's conclusions were contained in its report (A/47/19/Add.1).

16. While Council members had agreed on the continued relevance of the objectives of the 1974 World Food Conference, opinions had differed as to the most effective institutional arrangements for meeting those objectives. The majority believed that the mandate conferred by the World Food Conference would be best implemented by a reformed World Food Council, but some countries maintained that the Council's mandate could be shared among other bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

17. If the respective mandates of the various United Nations bodies concerned with food problems were clearly defined, the Council could be transformed into a "cabinet-level working body" serving the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as a specialized political advisory arm on hunger policies. Over its 18 years of existence, the World Food Council had established firm links with all its member countries, and the redistribution of its functions among other agencies would entail no financial savings but would undermine work in the area of hunger and food security for a long time to come. A reformed Council could, on the other hand, make considerable economies by confining its ministerial sessions to a single venue, Rome, where it would benefit from the contributions to secretariat expenses pledged by Italy.

18. In conclusion, he noted the general agreement on the need to reform the Council and hoped that members would be able to resolve their differences, since only through their combined support could they assist the hungry of the world.

19. Mr. CLARKE (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the World Food Council had fallen short of fulfilling its mandate. There was therefore an urgent need to improve coordination of work on food issues within the United Nations system, and he

(Mr. Clarke, United Kingdom)

regretted that the Ad Hoc Committee had been unable to reach broader consensus on the best way to proceed. The European Community and its member States agreed with the Ad Hoc Committee that the Council's future should be addressed in the context of the overall restructuring of the United Nations in the social and economic areas. They believed that the matter should be taken up in the appropriate forums dealing with the restructuring question and that due account in such discussions should be taken of the Ad Hoc Committee's report and of any guidelines on which the Council had reached consensus.

20. Mr. KARBASSI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the human tragedy brought about by the famine in Somalia was another vivid illustration of the world community's inability to ensure food security for all and eliminate death caused by famine and starvation. Indeed, severe drought threatened the lives of millions in the developing world, and the number of people suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition continued to increase. To make matters worse, the countries which were struggling with severe economic and social crises were those where the prospects for recovery and growth were most uncertain.

21. His delegation strongly believed that the United Nations system-wide response to short-term crisis situations and longer-term food security challenges still left much to be desired. While the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the appointment of a high-level coordinator within the United Nations Secretariat were welcome developments, more strenuous efforts were required by the United Nations system as a whole in the areas of coordination, emergency planning and field operations as well as in hunger-alleviation policies and programmes.

22. His delegation fully supported the reform of the United Nations social and economic sectors and was encouraged by the strong resolve of the majority of World Food Council members to reform and revitalize the Council so that it could live up to the expectations of its founders. His delegation therefore viewed with deep concern the proposal by some members to dissolve the Council on the ground that its functions overlapped with or duplicated those of FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) or the World Food Programme (WFP). In his delegation's opinion, there had been little, if any, overlap or duplication. The World Food Council differed considerably from other agencies in that it was policy-oriented, non-operational and stood above institutional or sectoral concerns or interests.

23. Given the Council's significance, it should be retained as an independent entity within the United Nations system, strengthened by a radical reform of its working methods. A revitalized World Food Council would do much to help the United Nations reach the ultimate objective of the World Food Conference, which was the eradication of hunger in the world. To enable the Council to exercise its political authority and provide effective policy guidance and coordination, national committees to evaluate United Nations food agencies should be established and regional consultations for preparatory and follow-up

(Mr. Karbassi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

activities should be held. The Islamic Republic of Iran was ready to work in any way possible to ensure the revitalization of a body which it viewed as crucial to the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system and urged other Governments to join in the reform efforts. To help the Second Committee reach consensus on a draft resolution, his delegation was also ready to consider proposals which accommodated the concerns of those wishing to dissolve the Council.

24. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria) welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Nutrition, which would take place in Rome under the auspices of FAO and should provide an opportunity for the international community to adopt concrete plans of action to control hunger, malnutrition and poverty. Indeed, the economic difficulties of developing countries, most of which were dependent on imports of agricultural products, had worsened because of those countries' heavy food bill. It was vital for the international community, particularly the United Nations system, to find ways and means of assisting developing countries which were net food importers.

25. The Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was currently deadlocked owing to the lack of agreement on the draft final act on agriculture. Since 1986, the closure of the negotiations had repeatedly been postponed, and it was now necessary to conclude them in a way that took the interests of the developing countries into account. It was also vital that the draft final act on agriculture should include specific measures on behalf of net food-importing developing countries that would enable them to meet the cost of their food imports. It was also imperative to support the agricultural reform efforts of those countries through investment financing in the agricultural sector, technical assistance and the transfer of technology on preferential and non-commercial terms.

26. The fishing sector, like the agricultural sector, made a major contribution to food supply and economic and social progress, particularly in developing countries. It was therefore necessary that the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development adopted by the 1984 World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development should be implemented. Specifically, its five programmes of action should constitute the framework for coordinating assistance for fishing activities in developing countries. His delegation hoped that the convening of an intergovernmental conference on fish stocks and highly migratory species decided upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would allow Member States and the United Nations system, especially FAO, to formulate concrete recommendations on the management and exploitation of marine biological resources.

27. The situation of food and agriculture in various regions of the world, particularly in Africa, had worsened. Agriculture in Africa, which had the lowest percentage of irrigated land in the world, was currently facing serious climatic and financial difficulties, a situation exacerbated by the sharp drop

(Mr. Ahmia, Algeria)

in Africa's export earnings in the 1980s, the deterioration in its terms of trade, drought and desertification. Climate change, the lack of investment and external financial support had hampered efforts to increase production, while costly food imports added to Africa's already heavy external debt and debt-servicing burdens.

28. The expansion and development of the agriculture and fishing sectors must not have an adverse effect on environmental protection. Conservation of land and marine biological resources were common tasks for developed and developing countries alike. Agriculture should be restructured to accommmodate sustainable development and meet the needs of present and future generations.

29. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that one of the most pressing problems facing the global community was the continuing lack of food security for many in the most vulnerable groups. The gravity of that situation, as tragically exemplified by the drought in Africa, demanded an intensified focus by the United Nations on food security problems. His delegation was therefore pleased that the Secretary-General was looking at the World Food Council in the context of his reform efforts. Previous reforms undertaken by the Council provided a firm basis for further action.

30. After listening to Council members' analyses of that body's problems, his delegation had concluded that ministerial attention and coordination had been inadequate and the analytic function replicated that of other agencies. There was an urgent need for a solution which would retain and strengthen the role of ministers in the area of food security policy while integrating the Council's analytic and coordination functions into FAO and the Economic and Social Council respectively.

31. His delegation sought to respond to the concern of some World Food Council members that the prominence of food security issues would decline without a specific agency to champion the cause. Accordingly, Canada recommended that food security questions should be given increased ministerial attention and prominence at a one-day meeting of ministers of agriculture that could be held as part of the biennial FAO Conference. The agenda would be confined to one or two items chosen in consultation with the Economic and Social Council. In addition, to strengthen the analysis of food security issues, a closer alliance could be forged between the World Food Council and FAO. With broader terms of reference, the FAO Committee on World Food Security could undertake a more comprehensive analysis of issues having an impact on global food security. Where FAO did not have the necessary expertise, it could request collaboration from other United Nations bodies that did. Finally, to ensure the integration of food security in development policy and the effective implementation of operational decisions, an essential role could be assigned to a revitalized Economic and Social Council and ACC. Those recommendations would send a clear signal to the hungry and malnourished people of the world that the United Nations system was ready and determined to respond effectively to their needs.

32. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), after drawing attention to a FAO briefing note on the implications of the Uruguay Round negotiations for food security, noted that the FAO medium-term plan for 1992-1997 had the following cross-sectoral priorities: environment and sustainable development; policy advice; women in development; human resources development; and economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. FAO had played a critical role in ensuring the inclusion of agriculture in Agenda 21 and was making efforts to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In coordination with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, FAO was providing assistance in the area of agricultural and rural development policy reform associated with macroeconomic stabilization, structural adjustment, transition to market economies and greater sensitivity to environmental and sustainability issues. The FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) International Conference on Nutrition to be held at Rome in December would be the first world-wide conference to focus on that critical subject. FAO worked closely with the World Bank and other lending agencies to foster sustainable agricultural development and provided direct assistance to developing countries through a number of special assistance projects. The ultimate aims of FAO were to promote agricultural production, ensure food security and guarantee a reasonable nutritional level for everyone.

33. World food supplies had improved remarkably in recent decades, thanks to the widespread adoption of more productive agricultural systems. Nevertheless, the most recent FAO World Food Survey indicated that there were still more than 500 million seriously undernourished people in the world and that structural adjustments were causing a gradual decline in nutritional levels in many developing countries. Structural adjustments were socially acceptable and economically viable only if introduced gradually over a period of time as part of a development strategy which guaranteed access to food to the poorest groups in society. Indeed, malnutrition was caused less by the material absence of food than by poverty. Even if poor countries accorded more priority and resources to agriculture, such assistance could never be more than a stopgap measure.

34. Above all, the developing countries needed trade to generate employment and hence income with which to repay their debts and assume responsibility for their own development. However, the terms of international trade were extremely unfavourable to developing countries, particularly to exporters of raw materials. Agricultural trade had stagnated for the past decade, and the prices of many commodities had reached unprecedented lows. Paradoxically, in an age of scientific and technological exploits and increasing economic interdependence, abundance and surpluses in some places existed side by side with poverty and deprivation in others. The means to win the fight against hunger and poverty were of a scientific, technical, economic and, above all, political order.

35. Mr. SERAJUL HUQ (Bangladesh) noted with concern that the volume of world food and agricultural production had fallen in 1991 for the first time since 1983. It was increasingly difficult for the developing countries to make

(Mr. Serajul Huq, Bangladesh)

progress in those fields because of unfavourable market conditions and declining international support. The decline in agricultural production in the developing countries directly affected the poorer sections of society, the vast majority of which lived in rural areas. Agricultural production could only be stimulated by comprehensively addressing such issues as poverty, birth control, illiteracy, health care, sustainable development and the status of women in rural areas. In addition, measures that could help to reverse rural-to-urban migration, which was a source of social destabilization, should be strengthened.

36. His Government had recently adopted a number of positive measures, including rural infrastructure-building activities, to ensure grass-roots participation in agricultural development programmes. It also sought to make credit available to the rural population through specialized banks. While food production in Bangladesh had nearly doubled in the past 20 years, efforts were being frustrated by population growth and periodic natural disasters. Fluctuating agricultural prices and limited market access had been an obstacle to increased production of certain cash crops such as jute and tea. Bangladesh had helped to establish a food security system within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

37. The World Food Council could improve its efficiency considerably by setting clear priorities and making extensive use of data, analyses and assessments of multilateral agencies with input from expert bodies such as FAO, as well as by making optimum use of its own resources.

38. Most developing countries were highly dependent on agricultural exports, while the markets of the developed countries were increasingly protected by tariff and non-tariff barriers. It was therefore essential to ensure an adequate flow of resources to and investment in the agricultural sector of developing countries and to increase market access for agricultural products from those countries. The technological means existed to produce enough food to feed the whole planet. All that was needed was the political will to break the vicious circle of poverty and economic decline.

39. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that, despite the progress achieved in the 1980s in reducing hunger and malnutrition, the international community was still a long way from solving the world food problem. In its report (A/47/19), the World Food Council had indicated that millions of people in the Eastern European region found it increasingly difficult to gain access to adequate food as a consequence of the transitional effects of economic reforms. That regrettably applied to Ukraine, which had been transformed by the command-economy system from one of the world's richest agricultural countries to an importer of basic agricultural commodities. It was to be hoped that through careful agrarian reforms Ukraine would attain agricultural self-sufficiency and become an agricultural exporter once again, to the benefit of the developing world.

(Mr. Goumenny, Ukraine)

40. In order to address the food problem, each country should mobilize its own resources and optimize its food potential, and international trade in foodstuffs should be enhanced by the elimination of discriminatory barriers, the correlation of food prices with those of industrial goods and the solution of the debt problem. His delegation supported the calls for a rapid conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the application of those rules to agricultural produce.

41. Ukraine favoured the development of multilateral cooperation mechanisms to resolve the food problem. Especially useful were the activities of the World Food Council, which deserved more active support from the international community and should, through the reform of the economic and social sector of the United Nations, become an effective instrument of the system. He called for enhanced coordination between the Council, FAO, WFP and IFAD, a question that should form part of the discussions on enhancing the economic and social sector of the United Nations.

42. Mr. REN Quan (China) said that despite some recent progress, the world still faced serious problems in the area of food and agriculture as a result of demographic pressures, the depletion of natural resources, degradation of the global environment and the irrational economic order and trading relations. Agriculture, particularly in the developing countries, played an essential role in providing employment opportunities and ensuring social stability and economic prosperity. The international economic environment and a just and rational international trading system were important guarantees for the sustained development of world agriculture and world food security.

43. He hoped that the impasse over the question of subsidies for agricultural products would soon be broken and that the Uruguay Round would be successfully concluded so that the terms of trade for agricultural products from developing countries might be improved. International development assistance should be further strengthened, and developing countries should fully tap their own potential and strengthen South-South cooperation in the field of food and agriculture. He commended the World Food Council on its valuable work and urged that body to enhance its efficiency and improve its working methods so as to effectively carry out its mandate as coordinator and policy adviser to other United Nations organizations in the field of food and agriculture.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
43rd meeting
held on
Thursday, 19 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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2 December 1992

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO STUDY, MITIGATE AND MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER (A/47/132, A/47/322-E/1992/102 and Add.1 and 2, A/47/375-S/24429)

1. Mr. REED (Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl), introducing the addenda to the Secretary-General's report on strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequence of the Chernobyl disaster (A/47/332-E/1992/102/Add.1 and 2), recalled the enormity of the Chernobyl disaster, noting that some consequences of a radiation accident could become apparent only after several years. A steep increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer in children had been confirmed by World Health Organization (WHO) experts, who had noted that thyroid cancers were occurring earlier than predicted and were particularly virulent. Two weeks previously, an international meeting at Kiev had dealt with health-related aspects of the disaster and had concluded that a more intensive study and closer monitoring of the affected population were required, which would place a further burden on the severely limited resources of the States concerned. Another meeting had also taken place between the Deputy Coordinator and the competent ministers from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to consider existing coordination arrangements and priorities for action in the areas of health, economic rehabilitation, socio-psychological rehabilitation and food and agriculture. Disappointment had been expressed at that meeting at the poor response to the appeal launched at the September 1991 Pledging Conference, which was apparently due to the time that had elapsed after the accident, media focus on other disaster situations and a global climate of economic stringency. There had also been a hiatus between the departure of the previous Coordinator and his own appointment.

2. Since his appointment, however, he had reviewed the situation in depth. A meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force had been convened and meetings had also been held with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to discuss their priorities for action. On the basis of the detailed report submitted to the current session of the General Assembly, he hoped that financial support could be found to implement the most pressing projects, especially those in the area of child health.

3. A staff member had been assigned to Kiev to coordinate international cooperation for Chernobyl in the region, with responsibility for the affected areas in Belarus and the Russian Federation as well as Ukraine. Plans called for a second staff member to concentrate on mobilizing additional assistance, including that from the private sector. The eight hundredth anniversary of Chernobyl in 1993 would provide a special opportunity to renew commitments for badly needed assistance.

4. Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the Community and its member States had repeatedly expressed their concern about the ongoing consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and had contributed both bilaterally and as a community to numerous projects to alleviate the accident's effects. The European Community attached particular importance to the establishment, under the auspices of WHO, of an international programme to mitigate the health effects of the Chernobyl accident and welcomed the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Community was providing assistance through a programme of technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and had recently negotiated an agreement covering such topics as radio ecology, emergency management, health issues and reactor safety.

5. As efforts to deal with the immense impact of the accident would last for years and possibly decades, it was essential that there should be an appropriate division of labour between national authorities, regional organizations and specialized agencies, taking into account the comparative advantage of each and the need to avoid wasteful duplication. The disappointing response to the September 1991 Pledging Conference should not be blamed on inadequate preparation of the Conference, but on the current lack of coordination between the United Nations and regional and other organizations in the area of nuclear safety. The countries of the European Community were involved in extensive programmes of assistance both to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to enhance nuclear safety in the new States of the former Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in accordance with the Secretary-General's new emphasis on the importance of action at the regional level. Certain activities, particularly those of WHO and IAEA, should continue within the framework of the United Nations system. However, there was an urgent need to evaluate many of the other activities envisaged in the Joint Plan of International Cooperation to Mitigate the Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster and to assess the respective roles of the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl and the specialized agencies. Until such a review had taken place, there was little purpose in appealing to Governments for support for the programmes set out in the Joint Plan.

6. In view of that situation, the European Community and its member States had proposed to the Governments of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to conduct a full review of United Nations programmes concerned with Chernobyl with a view to submitting a report to the Economic and Social Council in 1993. That report could then provide the basis for agreement at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly with regard to ongoing projects to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. His delegation would be happy to work with other interested delegations on a resolution establishing the framework for such a review.

7. Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) said that his country devoted approximately a quarter of its national budget to mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, a burden that seriously impeded the country's democratic reforms and transition to a market economy. Data presented at a conference held in Paris in 1991 indicated that the received and expected effective irradiation doses for the population of Belarus were the highest in the world. His Government was extremely concerned with the proliferation of a number of diseases and especially with the unexpected increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer, which had been confirmed by a WHO fact-finding mission. His delegation greatly appreciated the assistance provided by Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. The voluminous and unique data accumulated on the effects of radiation and on practical measures for dealing with it, including social rehabilitation, should be further studied and analysed for the benefit of humanity.

8. The Chernobyl disaster had underscored the importance of collective security and collective responsibility for the prevention of technological disasters. Preventive measures were needed to ensure the safety of existing nuclear reactors and the prevention of long-distance effects of radiation on ecological systems and on people. Practical steps in that direction included new agreements between the Governments of the affected countries and WHO and the Commission of the European Communities, as well as projects being implemented under the Chernobyl Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). His delegation also welcomed the international efforts being coordinated in Washington, Lisbon and Tokyo for the provision of technical and other assistance to the newly independent States of the Commonwealth to deal with the aftermath of Chernobyl.

9. However, he regretted that the vast potential of the United Nations to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster had not been fully utilized. Coordination of United Nations and other activities needed to be strengthened. The review of current and proposed measures contained in the reports might serve as a sound basis for future assistance from many sources, including the private sector.

10. His delegation felt that insufficient attention had been paid to the Chernobyl issue by the United Nations Secretariat and to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 45/190 and 46/150. He requested more detailed information on the budgetary resources to be devoted to a small Secretariat unit to deal with Chernobyl and on future practical arrangements to coordinate international efforts within the United Nations framework. His delegation also sought clarification on the future activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Chernobyl and its interaction with national mechanisms and institutions; on management of the resources of the United Nations Trust Fund for Chernobyl and the monitoring of assistance from sources other than the United Nations; and on new approaches to the dissemination of information on the effectiveness of international cooperation on Chernobyl. A long-term programme should be drawn up to seek new and additional resources, and the use of unconventional approaches should be envisaged to that end.

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

11. The recent Task Force meeting at Kiev had examined the priority projects of the United Nations Joint Plan, which should be included in existing and proposed programmes of aid and assistance to the newly independent States, as well as in the relevant Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Register, which would make it possible to benefit from the comparative advantages of other international coordination mechanisms. In distributing resources, account should be taken of the relative burden imposed by the disaster on individual States, those States' scientific, technical and economic capacities, and the effectiveness of the international support already received. The international coordination process should be based on the principles and mechanisms for coordination of assistance to the newly independent States of the Commonwealth which had been elaborated in Washington, Lisbon and Tokyo earlier in the year.

12. Mr. VOZNYAK (Russian Federation) said that the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster were long-term, and certain aspects were likely to grow more serious with time. The incidence of oncological diseases triggered by radiation peaked some 10-20 years after exposure, while genetic consequences might not surface until the second or subsequent generations. The disaster had affected wide areas of Ukraine and Belarus as well as the Russian Federation, in which new hot spots of contamination continued to be identified. Some 50,000 people had been relocated or had moved of their own free will from the affected area of the Russian Federation since the disaster. Despite the country's economic difficulties, 10 per cent of federal expenditure for capital construction was allocated for mitigation of the Chernobyl disaster. The Russian Federation thus had a pressing need for foreign currency to purchase the necessary supplies and equipment. What his Government sought was not so much direct assistance as mutually advantageous cooperation.

13. It was to be hoped that the knowledge and experience accumulated in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster could be used to develop an effective health-protection system in cases of nuclear accidents and other preventive measures that would benefit all mankind. He called for the development of reliable and scientifically sound security criteria for new technological systems, the organization of mandatory international commissions of experts for major projects, and the creation of an international economic mechanism to deal with the consequences of major transboundary incidents. His country could offer its foreign partners valuable information and experience it had gained in mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe in such varied areas as medicine, agriculture, environmental protection and community work. The Russian Federation was open to economic cooperation in contaminated areas and was prepared to provide favourable conditions for profitable foreign investments.

14. At the recent meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force at Kiev, it had been noted that the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Chernobyl had not been satisfactory. The role of the United Nations Coordinator of

(Mr. Voznyak, Russian Federation)

International Cooperation for Chernobyl had been weakened, particularly by frequent replacements of the Coordinator. His delegation was disappointed that the current Coordinator had not yet been able to visit the Russian Federation, Ukraine or Belarus to familiarize himself firsthand with the problems arising from the Chernobyl accident.

15. Cooperation to mitigate the effects of the Chernobyl accident could be more effective if it was coordinated on a regular basis by a body composed of plenipotentiary representatives of the United Nations, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus. The Russian Federation wished to establish close intergovernmental cooperation with all interested countries to eliminate the effects of radiation accidents, and to that end it would pursue contacts with business communities and non-governmental organizations.

16. The social and psychological stress caused by the Chernobyl accident posed a major problem. Religious organizations, in particular the Russian Orthodox Church, could play a role in bringing relief to the affected population. Together with the Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian Federation planned to implement a number of measures in that area and establish contacts with other religious organizations.

17. In addition to Chernobyl, the Russian Federation had inherited another bitter legacy from the Soviet Union. Vast territories and millions of people had been subjected to radioactive contamination as a result of other radiation accidents and nuclear tests. A special programme for the radiation rehabilitation of the Ural region was being carried out, and assistance was being provided to the population affected by a major radiation accident in the Chelyabinsk region in 1957 and by contamination from a radiochemical installation. The former Soviet Union had conducted 715 nuclear tests, including 212 in the atmosphere. The Russian Government had issued an executive order on measures to enhance the health of the population and provide for the social and economic development of settlements situated in the area of the Semipalatinsk test site. Similar measures would also be required in other areas of the Russian Federation.

18. In an appeal to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, Aleksiy II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, had called upon the international community to alleviate the suffering of the victims of Chernobyl. That would require the speedy implementation of United Nations programmes to mitigate and overcome the consequences of the disaster.

19. Mr. JOSEPH (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that, in May 1991, the World Health Assembly had approved the establishment of the WHO International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident. The first objective of the Programme was to alleviate the health effects of the accident in areas significantly contaminated with radionuclides. Such work focused on clinical examinations and care of exposed populations. The other main objective of the Programme was to learn from the accident in order to improve medical preparedness for radiation emergencies in the future.

(Mr. Joseph, WHO)

20. The Programme was currently implementing four pilot projects which covered the populations in the heavily contaminated areas and dealt with leukaemia and other haemoplastosis, selected thyroid disorders, including thyroid cancer among children, brain damage during exposure in utero, and the management of data for epidemiological registries. The Programme was being implemented by Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation and supported by extrabudgetary funds and other donations, including contributions in kind. A fifth pilot project, on oral health in contaminated areas of Belarus, was being initiated.

21. In 1992, emphasis had been placed on the development of standard protocols for each pilot project procurement and provision of much needed medical equipment, and the training of local staff. Under the thyroid pilot project, 16 ultrasonic instruments had been provided for use in examinations of thyroid cases in hospitals and during field missions. Instruments and kits had been contributed for immunoassay and enzyme assay to determine thyroid function and monitor the treatment of thyroid cancer. Nearly 100 staff had received domestic training in the use of those instruments, and overseas training of specialists had been sponsored.

22. In April 1991, an agreement had been signed between the Director-General of WHO and the ministries of health of the three States. The agreement stipulated that all health-related international projects should be coordinated with, or integrated into, the International Programme. It also called for the establishment of a Management Committee, composed of participating ministries, WHO and representatives of other Member States supporting the Programme. The first meeting of that Committee had been held at Kiev on 5 and 6 November 1992.

23. It was expected that the pilot projects would be completed in about two years. By then, the roughly 270,000 people living in the strictly controlled zones of the three affected States would have undergone appropriate screening and medical examinations. Advanced examination of the patients would also be performed, and some curative procedures would be supported. The results would be assessed and would enable preliminary conclusions to be drawn for long-term investigations of the various health consequences of the Chernobyl accident. However, the human and financial resources available to the three affected States and the WHO Programme were currently insufficient. It had been estimated that, over the next 15 to 20 years, approximately $150 to $200 million would be needed.

24. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukraine) said that the meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Chernobyl at Kiev on 3 and 4 November 1992 had contributed to the strengthening of coordination of international efforts to deal with the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The meeting had been particularly important in that it had designated priority areas for international cooperation to mitigate the effects of the accident and had proposed specific projects. His delegation nevertheless regretted

(Mr. Goudima, Ukraine)

that the meeting had been convened somewhat hastily and without due preparation, which had been reflected in its work.

25. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/47/322/Add.1), in their efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, international organizations were to give priority to health, economic rehabilitation, socio-psychological rehabilitation and food and agriculture. Unfortunately, those priorities did not include measures to alleviate long-term radiation contamination or lower the radiation background of vast territories, nor did they cover other urgent problems for whose solution international assistance would be very important.

26. The complexity and diversity of the problems caused by the Chernobyl accident required greater involvement by the United Nations and its bodies and specialized agencies. Unfortunately, the Secretary-General's report did not give much attention to prospects for further international cooperation in the area of Chernobyl. The report itself had been hastily prepared and was purely informative. It made little mention of the possible participation of a number of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, such as the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in solving the problems caused by the Chernobyl disaster. At its thirty-second session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended that ECE, in close cooperation with IAEA, should conduct a study of the potential danger of atomic radiation in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

27. Another shortcoming of the Secretary-General's report was that it did not reflect the organizational difficulties of efforts to deal with the Chernobyl problem. For several months after the retirement of the previous United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl, a new Coordinator had not been appointed, and the unit of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with Chernobyl had for a long time been unable to acquire a permanent place for its work and to determine its composition, in spite of the fact that the relevant allocations had been made and candidates had been nominated. His delegation hoped that the new Coordinator would carefully examine the situation that had emerged and take the necessary measures.

28. In the current circumstances, when dozens of international organizations, agencies and funds had been mobilized to solve the problems caused by Chernobyl, the role of the United Nations Coordinator was particularly important. The Coordinator was not only a link between other organizations but was virtually responsible for the implementation of programmes. The Secretariat unit dealing with Chernobyl could assist him in his efforts.

29. His delegation hoped that the international community, including States Members of the United Nations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals would participate actively in solving the problems caused by Chernobyl. The most difficult and long-term task was to find ways of counteracting effects of radiation on human health. There was already clear

(Mr. Goudima, Ukraine)

evidence of such negative effects: the number of all illnesses had increased dramatically, and the number of congenital deformities and developmental anomalies, thyroid tumours and disorders and blood diseases were increasing. There were more than 3 million people, including 580,000 children, in the high-risk category who required special medical treatment because of their exposure to radiation. The solution of such problems without external assistance would be extremely difficult because of the low level of diagnostic and medical treatment and a shortage of medicine.

30. One of the most complicated problems, the solution of which was vital not only for Ukraine but for the entire European region, involved the shielding of the fourth reactor. In its current state, the existing structure, known as "Sarcophagus", could not be considered absolutely reliable; it did not guarantee radiation safety, especially under such extreme conditions as earthquakes and storms. In view of the exceptional nature of the problem, the Government of Ukraine had announced an international competition to transform the Ukrytie site at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant into an ecologically safe system.

31. Ukraine had to cope with the complex and multifaceted problems of Chernobyl at a time when it faced a complicated internal situation. The country's economic situation continued to deteriorate and was characterized by a sharp drop in production rates in all areas of the economy, inflation and a decline in the standard of living. Under the circumstances, it was extremely difficult to mobilize resources to solve the problems caused by the accident. Ukraine would welcome all measures taken by the United Nations Coordinator to convene an international forum of international business circles and social organizations with a view to mobilizing funds for the implementation of priority Chernobyl projects. Since Ukraine had not yet acquired the necessary experience, and did not have the relevant knowledge and technology to solve the problems caused by Chernobyl, the Coordinator should promote cooperation with a view to developing, producing and exchanging technologies to solve those problems.

32. The international community's activities in the area of the treatment and recuperation of children affected by the accident and the provision of essential medical equipment and medicines to affected regions were particularly valuable. While Ukraine appreciated the assistance it had received from many countries in eliminating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, it understood that the principal responsibility lay with the Ukrainian Government, on which the effectiveness of the measures being carried out would largely depend. In accordance with a decision of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, a draft national programme on the elimination of the consequences of the disaster and the social protection of citizens affected by it had been prepared for 1993-1995 and the period up to the year 2000. In accordance with a resolution of the Supreme Council, preliminary work was being done to ensure the complete closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1993.

33. Ms. O'DELL (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) said that, at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the representative of IAEA had informed the Committee of the conclusions and recommendations of the year-long International Chernobyl Project. That undertaking, which IAEA had been requested to coordinate, involved some 200 scientists from 23 countries and seven international organizations. The assessment of the radiological and health situation had been limited to the urgent needs of the population living in areas affected by radioactive contamination. Recommendations had been made concerning areas where further study was needed and where action should be taken.

34. One of the projects proposed by participating Governments related to the use of caesium binders to reduce the radiocaesium contamination of the milk and meat of grazing animals. During the past year, controlled experiments, extensive field trials, training sessions and technology transfers had demonstrated that that method was a cost-effective way of reducing food contamination and allowing many farmers to return to their traditional farming practices. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was the lead agency for the implementation of that project, to which IAEA lent its technical support.

35. Subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, IAEA intended to: continue supporting the work of the Chernobyl Centre for International Research by participating in the work of the associated International Scientific Advisory Committee; begin a retrospective assessment of doses received by Chernobyl decontamination workers, evacuees and other high-risk groups and review the protective measures taken; and support research and development on Chernobyl-related issues aimed at providing information needed for the proper interpretation, assessment and management of the post-Chernobyl radiological situation. In carrying out those activities, IAEA would continue to cooperate with other organizations providing assistance to the affected States.

36. Mr. MINAGAWA (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to learn that the International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident, established by the World Health Assembly and supported with a contribution of $20 million by the Japanese Government, was well under way. it was to be hoped that the Programme would achieve its three main objectives of alleviating the health effects of the accident, consolidating experience with a view to improving medical preparedness for future radiological emergencies and obtaining unique scientific data in medical treatment for human radiology.

37. International cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the accident would have to be carefully coordinated in order to ensure the most effective utilization of resources, particularly because they were needed to address the many other major changes currently taking place around the world. The Secretariat should therefore make vigorous efforts to ensure greater coordination in order to obtain effective, unambiguous and credible results and avoid duplication of effort.

38. Mr. LEFEVRE (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the UNESCO Chernobyl programme had launched a three-year programme, in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IAEA and the European Community, to study the hydrological impacts of nuclear power plant systems. The first international seminar had been held in Paris in September 1992, with the participation of 15 different countries. An international Chernobyl Ecological Research Network had also been launched in October 1992 at Minsk. A preliminary study on the geochemical effects of radioactive contamination would be launched before the end of the year.

39. UNESCO had also developed a large-scale project to address the major problem of the psychological rehabilitation of those affected by the disaster. Four pilot community centres for psychological rehabilitation were currently being developed - two in Belarus, one in the Russian Federation and one in Ukraine - and should be operational by mid-1993. The project included the construction of facilities, a review of the specific needs of the population covered by each centre, training-programme development and staff recruitment and training. Once operational, each centre would be closely monitored for a period of six months. A second centre would soon be established in the Russian Federation, and four additional centres were currently being planned.

40. At the request of Ukraine, UNESCO was also preparing an international mission to review the current state of education and services in the field of psychology. The mission would seek to assess the needs to be met through international cooperation and the appropriateness of creating an international centre for psychological rehabilitation. A UNESCO office had been opened at Kiev in October 1992 to coordinate those activities.

41. In the educational field, UNESCO was preparing a reference document on Chernobyl and the environment and planning a large environmental education meeting, to be held in December 1992 at Kiev. In addition, a pre-planning study on the UNESCO project, to establish an economic and social development area for the relocation of some of the displaced from contaminated areas had been prepared with assistance from Denmark and was available at the UNESCO liaison office. Steps were already being taken in the Russian Federation towards the creation of such a development area, and Belarus and Ukraine had expressed interest in the establishment of similar areas in their territories. UNESCO had also conducted preliminary studies on a programme for the large-scale production of resettlement housing and would work closely on that project with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other agencies.

42. In addition, UNESCO had contributed to the implementation of the Chernobyl Programme by mobilizing cooperation and resources necessary for the conduct of a number of vital humanitarian missions; it was also organizing fund-raising cultural events.

(Mr. Lefevre, UNESCO)

43. Working under heavy constraints, the United Nations system was endeavouring to move from mere coordination to genuine cooperation, and it pursued the aim, which UNESCO fully supported, of placing its response to emergencies within a longer-term development framework. UNESCO had been heartened by the conclusions of the recent Inter-Agency Task Force meeting, which had affirmed that the UNESCO Chernobyl Programme was working exactly within the updated priorities set by the ministers of the affected States.

44. Mr. REED (Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl), responding to comments by delegations, said that the general restructuring process within the Secretariat had also affected the Organization's work on Chernobyl. He himself had only been appointed in June 1992 and had so far been prevented by pressure of time and commitments from visiting the area. The Deputy Coordinator had, however, visited the three countries concerned, and he hoped to make a similar visit in the near future.

45. Extensive consultations had recently been held on the best means of deploying the limited Secretariat resources available and it had been decided to assign one of the two professional posts to the region, to serve the three affected Governments on the ground. That decision had been implemented, and one staff member was currently in Kiev. Subject to availability of the necessary resources for 1993, a qualified candidate for the second post would be appointed. Other resources available for setting up a Secretariat unit were very modest, comprising some secretarial support and provisions for travel, which had already been entirely exhausted.

46. Referring members to the report contained in document A/47/322/Add.1 and to his own introductory statement for answers to other questions raised, he said that his office was cooperating closely with the three affected Governments to identify priority areas for action which would command a sympathetic international response. The report provided the first compilation of information on measures that had actually been implemented. The Inter-Agency Task Force meeting at Kiev had concluded on a positive note: priorities for future action had been clearly defined and more information was available than ever before. Given the necessary interaction between donors, non-governmental organizations and Governments with the three Governments concerned, he was confident that real progress would be achieved in bringing assistance to the region.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(b) FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/47/19 and Add.1 and A/47/395)

47. Mr. CABRAL (Guinea-Bissau) said that problems of food and agricultural development could only be addressed by an integrated approach which took into account their global context. Such an approach constituted one of the

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

principal merits of Agenda 21, which provided a vehicle for developing dynamic and innovative responses to the world's problems that was consistent with the objective of sustainable development.

48. Noting the tragic connection between poverty and environmental degradation, he questioned how the most disadvantaged groups in society could be constrained to exercise environmental discipline when any disruption of their traditional lifeline to their immediate environment signified certain death. Policies must be sensitive to the interdependence of food, poverty and the environment.

49. The chapters of Agenda 21 dealing with such key issues as poverty, consumption patterns, natural resources management, agriculture and sustainable rural development pointed to specific measures which could be implemented in pursuit of its goals. For its part, the Government of Guinea-Bissau based its agricultural development policy on functional strategies conducive to the gradual attainment of food self-sufficiency. The incorporation of environmental, cultural and socio-economic considerations in development programmes led to greater participation by the beneficiaries themselves, and measures should therefore be adopted to prepare the more vulnerable groups to withstand the adverse effects of growth and structural adjustment programmes.

50. The key to the success of food self-sufficiency programmes lay in breaking the vicious cycle of subsistence farming and in transforming small-scale producers into agents of development, equipped with the necessary skills and materials to manage agricultural projects and to participate in the marketing of their produce. To that end, national capacities must be strengthened, with a view to the ultimate phasing out of external assistance, and investments should be concentrated in the agricultural sector and in technical assistance, as recommended by the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. In that context, he noted with concern the recent drop in levels of external assistance for agriculture and the deterioration in the world food security situation which, in Africa, had become critical.

51. In its report on the work of its eighteenth session, the World Food Council had concluded that efforts must be made to enhance the efficiency of emergency relief programmes. He noted with concern the decline in contributions to the development activities of the World Food Programme (WFP), since food security and self-sufficiency could only be attained through the promotion of economic growth and support for agricultural programmes in the food-deficit countries. Those programmes should aim not only to meet food needs, but also to promote surplus production for export as a source of much-needed foreign currency.

52. In view of the need for close cooperation between the relevant agencies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21, particular

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

importance attached to the role of the World Food Council, and he hoped that wisdom would prevail in determining the Council's future.

53. Finally, he believed that the forthcoming International Conference on Nutrition would make a vital contribution to endeavours to arrest the tragic upward trend in hunger and malnutrition.

54. Mr. MALLYA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77. Despite advances in agricultural technology, malnutrition and hunger had continued to increase, creating the paradox of misery in the midst of plenty. The World Food Council had been created by the World Food Conference in 1974 in response to the need for a collective food security strategy within the framework of world food policy, and it had performed admirably in coordinating world food policy in increasingly difficult conditions. Advances in food production technology had not kept pace with the population explosion and had been attenuated by wasteful consumption patterns, which had created artificial food shortages in food-deficit areas. The situation had been further exacerbated by natural calamities and the outbreak of ethnic rivalries with the end of the cold war, which had created new refugee flows that had caused resources to be directed away from food production.

55. His delegation was convinced that the World Food Council had made important strides over its 20 years of existence and believed that the general restructuring process in the social and economic fields of the United Nations should also involve world food issues and institutions like the Council, thereby strengthening its capacity to deal with development issues in an integrated manner. Accordingly, his delegation believed that the Council should be strengthened by increasing its manpower and financial resources so that it could fulfil its mandate. While retaining its identity and its secretariat in Rome, the Council should work more closely with FAO and other Rome-based food agencies to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency and should be more closely coordinated with the Economic and Social Council.

56. As most of the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa were currently experiencing the worst drought in recent memory, he stressed the need for concerted efforts by the Organization and its specialized agencies to mobilize relief and assistance. He expressed his country's gratitude for the assistance provided thus far.

57. Ms. NCHAPI (Lesotho) agreed that the objectives of the World Food Conference remained as important in the 1990s as they had been in 1974. However, Lesotho's views differed from those of other members of the Council as to how the United Nations system, including the Council, might improve its effectiveness in dealing with the problem of world hunger and malnutrition. Her delegation felt that the Council's mandate and functions could best be served by other United Nations agencies. In its current composition, the

(Ms. Nchapi, Lesotho)

Council did not qualify to do the coordinating and strengthening work of international agencies concerned with food production and distribution such as FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and WFP. Collective world food security could be achieved only through the reorientation, revitalization and strengthening of FAO, WFP, IFAD and the United Nations, and there would be no role for the World Food Council under that arrangement.

58. The Council's functions could be distributed as follows: food-security monitoring and analysis as well as enhancing the efficiency of production and distribution of food and agricultural products would be the global responsibility of FAO, at whose biennial Conferences ministers of agriculture would discuss the roles played by FAO and WFP. Those ministers would also discuss the role played by IFAD during meetings of the Fund's Governing Council. FAO responsibilities would have to be coordinated with those of WFP and IFAD; the Secretary-General of the United Nations would oversee and coordinate, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the implementation by the relevant food agencies of decisions reached by the ministers of agriculture. On the basis of the reports from those agencies and the Secretary-General, heads of State and Government would determine policy directions through a revitalized Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

59. Such an arrangement would not only facilitate the involvement of the highest authorities in all levels of the work of those international agencies but would also lead to a more equitable and efficient distribution of food between and within countries, thereby ensuring that the operational activities of those agencies were coordinated under an effective and integrated world food policy.

60. The submission of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the World Food Council to the General Assembly as the Assembly considered the reform of the United Nations in general and that of the Economic and Social Council in particular was timely. She hoped that the General Assembly would take the report into consideration as it searched for the most effective ways of fulfilling the World Food Council's mandate within the framework of the overall restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations.

61. Mr. MARKS (United States of America) recalled that his country's commitment to the goals and objectives of the World Food Council was beyond doubt. However, since the Council's existing institutional arrangements did not permit those goals and objectives to be met, his Government had reluctantly concluded that the Council was incapable of carrying out its policy formulation and coordination functions and that such functions should be assigned to other bodies within the United Nations system. His delegation firmly believed that all States had a common interest in improving the system-wide capability of the United Nations to address such matters. The necessary

(Mr. Marks, United States)

improvement could best be achieved by dissolving the Council and transferring its responsibilities to a newly restructured Economic and Social Council and the ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/C.2/47/L.29, L.40 and L.42)

Draft resolution on economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and on the Arab population of the Syrian Golan (A/C.2/47/L.29)

62. Mr. MUDZAKIR (Malaysia) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.29 on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Djibouti, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates. The sponsors had deep sympathy for the Palestinian people and hoped that the resolution would receive the full support of all delegations.

Draft resolution on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation (A/C.2/47/L.40)

63. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77, said that it was the expectation of the sponsors that the draft would enjoy wide support from the Committee.

Draft resolution on the international Conference on Population and Development (A/C.2/47/L.42)

64. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 as well as China and Japan, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.42. The sponsors attached particular importance to the draft text and hoped that it would be unanimously adopted by the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on integration of economies in transition into the world economy (A/C.2/47/L.35)

65. Mr. LUEDIG (Estonia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Azerbaijan and Turkey, and said he was sure that the draft resolution would enjoy the support of the entire Committee following informal consultations.

AGENDA ITEM 80: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

Draft resolution on protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/C.2/47/L.38/Rev.1)

66. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that it would be unanimously adopted by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Friday, 20 November 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Miss DIOP (Senegal)
(Vice-Chairman)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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In the absence of Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay), Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(b) FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/47/19 and Add.1, A/47/395)

1. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt) said that his country attached great importance to food and agricultural issues and pointed out that the volume of world food and agricultural production had fallen in 1991 for the first time since 1983.

2. The majority of developing countries depended on food imports to satisfy their needs ($61.2 million in 1990) and at the same time their exports were primarily tropical agricultural products and raw materials.

3. Moreover, the cereal stocks of the developed countries were diminishing dramatically, which affected food aid prospects. Nevertheless, his delegation believed that food aid could not provide a lasting solution or be the sole way of handling the problem. It was a matter of concern that the food supply situation had worsened in many countries since the World Food Conference had been held in 1974. At a time when it should be helping the developing countries to develop their agricultural sector, the international community had cut back on external assistance to agriculture. Providing a stimulus to agricultural production would create a basis for the industrialization and diversification of economic structure, and the agro-industrial sector was vital for economic growth and development. In that context, the importance of scientific and technological research must be stressed, as well as the resulting transfer of technology to the developing countries in the field of agriculture.

4. His delegation paid tribute to the four organs within the United Nations that were dealing with food and agriculture: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the World Food Programme (WFP); and the World Food Council (WFC).

5. The latter, being the highest political body dealing with food and agricultural matters, had been carrying out an important role in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. As a member of the Council, his delegation believed that it should be restructured in order to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency.

6. Mr. MURIITHI (Kenya) recalled that the World Food Council at its eighteenth session (Nairobi, June 1991) had made a number of recommendations relating to its future mandate and the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition in the world. When it had been established in 1974, the Council had been given the mandate to coordinate the activities of bodies like FAO, WFP and

(Mr. Muriithi, Kenya)

IFAD in all aspects of food matters, and to serve as a ministerial forum for reviewing policy issues and recommending remedial measures.

7. The Council had been operating without difficulty, and meanwhile the United Nations had strengthened the various structures dealing with the world food situation, for example by creating the FAO World Food Security Committee and the WFP Committee on Food Aid Policies, which were to direct the world's attention to the problem of hunger and to issues of food security.

8. Many delegations had acknowledged during the current session that food security, hunger and malnutrition continued to be a global problem and that food shortages in parts of Africa due to drought, civil strife and flows of refugees and displaced persons had long-term implications. Such a situation called for rapid and coordinated relief assistance in the form of millions of tons of food.

9. At the current time, more than 550 million people were chronically hungry and the figure was expected to increase. The raison d'être of WFC was as acute currently as it had been 18 years earlier at the time of its establishment. The future role and the very existence of the Council must be seen in the context of global food security and the restructuring of the economic and social activities within the United Nations.

10. At its eighteenth session, the Council had set up a high-level Ad Hoc Committee to define its future role and make proposals on the matter. That Committee had not been able to complete its work in 1992, and his delegation supported the proposal to extend its mandate into 1993.

11. In conclusion, Kenya pointed out that the shortcomings attributed to WFC stemmed from the fact that it had never been provided with the authority or the financial means needed to discharge its responsibilities.

12. Mr. MINAGAWA (Japan) said, with reference to the future of the World Food Council, that unfortunately no real dialogue had taken place nor had there been any consensus as to the future during the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee set up to review the role and functioning of the Council and its place in the restructuring of the United Nations.

13. There was agreement as to the importance of world food security; the WFC objectives continued to be valid and should be pursued in the context of the reform of the United Nations system.

14. As one of the world's largest importers of food, Japan had supported the establishment of WFC, which since 1974 had devoted its efforts to promoting world food security. Nevertheless, the Council had failed to provide the political leadership and coordination that its founders had expected, because of the institutional deficiencies that afflicted it. With its small secretariat, it could not coordinate and monitor all areas of food security.

(Mr. Minagawa, Japan)

Its secretariat would be more efficient if it were part of a bigger organization.

15. Japan consequently made the following suggestions: the overall leadership role with respect to food policy should be performed by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council; coordination at the agency level should be entrusted to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), through a subcommittee to deal with food security matters; and the monitoring and analysis of the world food situation should be carried out in conjunction with the activities of other agencies with greater expertise, like FAO.

16. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that his country sided with those which during the eighteenth session of the World Food Council had underscored the basic importance of national efforts to create food self-reliance, eliminate inequalities in commodity distribution and utilization, hasten the social and economic development of agricultural regions, and ensure food security for all.

17. It was also fundamentally important to improve the situation of trade in food products. The Uruguay Round talks were crucial to resolving issues in that area.

18. It was also important to step up national and regional research programmes in the area of biotechnology in combination with programmes for transfer of food production technology; and it was necessary to take new steps to coordinate emergency food aid in cases of civil disturbance, wars and natural disasters.

19. His delegation had listened with interest to the statement by the Vice-Chairman of the World Food Council, Mr. Lifanchikov, and noted the need for a fundamental restructuring of United Nations activities concerning food, including, inter alia, measures to avoid duplication and to reduce budgetary expenditure.

20. Mr. PALACIOS (Guatemala), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, said that the world food situation was more serious and that world food security faced greater challenges than had been the case at the time of the World Food Conference in 1974. A serious political commitment to the elimination of hunger, going beyond mere rhetoric, was needed.

21. The six countries considered that, in spite of the criticisms levelled at WFC, the objectives that had led to its creation continued to be valid; that notwithstanding, it should still be revitalized with a view to increasing its efficiency. There was a need to improve the Council's work relations and cooperation with the United Nations bodies responsible for food, such as FAO, WFP and IFAD, in line with the ideas put forward at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council, held on 14 and

(Mr. Palacios, Guatemala)

15 September 1992. It must not be forgotten that the Council had been constituted at ministerial level, thereby becoming a political organ.

22. In reply to accusations that WFC duplicated the work of other bodies, he stressed that the Council fulfilled a necessary role of coordination and formulation of policies on food issues.

23. In conclusion, he cited a sentence from the report of the Council on the work of its eighteenth session: "There can be no lasting peace or prosperity as long as millions of people continue to endure an existence defined by poverty and hunger".

24. Miss BELMAR (Mexico) said that at the current session of the General Assembly the need had arisen to review the functions of the Council and restructure it in order to strengthen its work and its leadership function. Mexico supported the restructuring process and reaffirmed the aims that had led to the creation of the Council, but maintained that it must increase its efficiency; in that regard, she referred to the proposals made at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Council. The main task was to strengthen the forums that benefited the developing countries in vital areas such as that of food.

25. Mr. LENZI (Italy) said that, as the host country of the World Food Council and of the other agricultural and food organizations of the United Nations system, Italy intended to make further contributions to the premises in which they operated. Italy would take responsibility for the logistical arrangements regarding the functioning of the Council secretariat, thereby increasing cost-effectiveness. New premises would be provided free of charge, so as to reduce the burden on the United Nations budget, and in future Rome would be the venue for ministerial meetings of the Council, which would be held every two years, as proposed at the eighteenth session.

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH (continued)

(b) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (continued) (A/C.2/47/L.43)

26. The CHAIRMAN, introducing the item and announcing the introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.43, said that Japan should be included in the list of sponsors.

27. Mr. MINAGAWA (Japan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.43, entitled "United Nations University", on behalf of its sponsors, and said that Canada, Colombia and Ghana had also asked to become sponsors.

28. The United Nations University, set up in December 1973, was an international community of scholars working in an environment of academic freedom. In the light of the unforeseen changes taking place around the world, Japan believed that the role played by the University had become even more important. It had now moved into its permanent headquarters, constructed

(Mr. Minagawa, Japan)

by the Government of Japan in the centre of metropolitan Tokyo. Now that it had a solid physical base for its operations, the University could further expand its activities, so as to achieve the lofty goals that the international community had set for it.

29. He went on to review the main points of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.43. Inter alia, it welcomed the completion of the permanent headquarters building in Japan, requested the University to pursue its efforts to enhance its visibility and to continue its fund-raising efforts, and appealed to the international community to make voluntary contributions to the University. In concluding, he expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 144: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY (continued) (A/C.2/47/L.41)

30. Mr. MOHAMMED (Bosnia and Herzegovina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.41, on international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery, on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Armenia and Poland. In view of its urgency, it was to be hoped that the General Assembly would support the draft resolution.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

31. The CHAIRMAN said that the general discussion on all the agenda items allocated to the Second Committee have now been concluded.

32. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria), on behalf of the Group of African States, asked for the deadline for submission of draft resolutions concerning agenda item 12 (Report of the Economic and Social Council) to be extended, so as to allow for submission of a draft resolution on the Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

33. The CHAIRMAN announced that on Monday, 23 November, informal consultations chaired by Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, would be held on draft resolutions A/C.2/47/L.29, L.35, L.40, L.41, L.42 and L.43.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.